



Media Update

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BNFL Waste Shipments Begin

Following last week's authorization to begin operations on the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, BNFL Inc. initiated shipments of transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico. The first shipment, consisting of two casks (TRUPACT II containers), arrived at WIPP late yesterday.

Regular shipments to WIPP from the BNFL facility are planned for the next 10 years. Plutonium-contaminated waste that was sent to INEEL for storage in the 1970s and 1980s is being sent to WIPP for permanent disposal.

In addition to initiating waste shipments, BNFL began removing the soil covering the waste stored in the Retrieval Enclosure. Approximately 54,000 cubic meters of waste is stacked on an asphalt pad and covered with 3 to 5 feet of soil. BNFL will spend the next 4 to 6 weeks uncovering a large section of the waste stack. Then, the containers will be removed and undergo a series of tests including real-time radiography, gamma spectrometry, and sampling to determine the exact contents. Following the tests, the waste containers will either be directly shipped to WIPP or be processed and repackaged prior to shipment.

BNFL Inc. is an Arlington, Virginia-based environmental cleanup company providing waste management, decontamination and decommissioning, and facility operations for the nation's most difficult environmental and nuclear challenges.

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